

Life of Joseph Smith McDonald.

Jan. 20, 1920

*note by
grandfather
1920*

Joseph Smith McDonald was born in Belfast County Down Ireland, in the year 1842. My parents joined the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1841. In 1843 they sold their homes and started across the ocean together with the Saints. I was one year old then. The ship we sailed in were very small We could not sail unless the wind blew. Insead of the wind it was calm and we could not move. We laid on the waters for ten days and could not move, then the wind began to blow and there came a great storm and blew us out of our course so that we were on the ocean six weeks. We broke our cable twice in letting it down to steady our ship. Every body was sure the ship was sunk and the passengers drowned, but the Lord spared our lives and we landed in the United States.

My father and brothers worked seven years to get teams and wagons to cross the plains in the year of 1850. I had the privelege of seeing Joseph and Hyrum Smith after they were murdered by the mob. My father and mother were sure good people at that time my father was going to his work when six or eight of the mob surrendered him and demanded if he was a Mormon He said "No I am a Latter Day Saint". The leader gave him his hand and said We intended to kill you but you are too brave a man to be killed for your belief, go on your way and you will be unmolested.

I was eight years old when we started to cross the plains in 1850 with three yoke of cows and a pany. We were loaded with provisions and other things necessary to live in a new country. It was a very bad year for the Cholera.

My father was a very stout man but he took the cholera about four o'clock and about dark he was a dead man. Next morning we took some goods boxes and made a coffin and buried him on the North side of the Platte River. It must of been a very great trial for my poor old mother to leave her husband on the plains, and with seven children to go th some place she didn't know. but she was with the Saints going to Zion in the Rocky Mt. and I suppose they helped her some for she was very religious always. We traveled more than a thousand miles to get to Salt Lake Valley.

The Indians were very bad that year. We had to guard our teams while they were feeding with a strong guard. We could see Buffalo and Indians everywhere. We had to stop our train or they would have run through it. The captain rode up about half way and stoped the hind end of the train and told the other part of the train to drive on, so the buffalo could pass. They were over half a day passing there must of been three or four thousand of them all on the run.

When we got to great Salt Lake there was a Fort built of log houses with dirt roofs, no floors in them. We wintered there in the year of 1851. We were advised by the authorities to move out in the country and the boys must take up farms and built up the country and make houses. So we moved to Mountainville, Mow called Alpine. There were twelve or fifteen families there at that time, we did not like it. It was close up to the Mountains and the snow was very deep that winter. There were two many Indians there.

There was an Indian we called Squash. He stole a little girl from here, and when it got dark he said it would not stop crying and he put his foot on it and pulled its arms and legs on it and pulled its arms and legs out. When peace was made he bragged of what he had done. Some men got after him for it. They chashed him around through Cedar Valley and back through Springville. My brother John helped to catch him. They licked him up in a house back of Bishop Johnsons. They kept him here three or four days and somebody went in and cut his throat from ear to ear. They sure did it up just right for I saw it myself.

In the Spring of 1852 we moved to Springville. We took some land and went to farming and sold some of our teams for something to live on till we could raise something. Mother sent me to herding cows to help along. I herded cows four or five years in the summer. and went to school in the winter. I didn't get much of an education, all that was taught then was reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic, but what I did learn has helped me all right thorough life.

While herding I had good experience with the Indians. They were very numerous at thattime they made a practice of taking our dinners. We would fight for it but they were men and we were boys, so it alwayseeded by loosing our dinners and getting a good licking with a quirt. We were herding on a dry bench and some men had made a canal just above us. We

dug a swimming hole and turned some water in it and we forgot to turn it off, and it run down through the country and made it very muddy. The next day there were thirty or forty Indians hunting rabbits. The way they caught rabbits,

when one jumped up they would all take after it. The rabbit happened to run over the mud. The first Indian hit the mud and down the rest went all on top of him. It was sure fun for us. We hollered "Goddy, Goody" and slapped our hands. But when they got up and got the mud wiped off a little they came up and got off their horses, caught us by the arms and gave us a good licking with a quirt and a lariat. Of course when we could grab a rock they would get it. but it all ended as usual and we got a good licking.

About that time the Walker War broke out and all the Indians disappeared. We built a wall twelve feet high for protection. The last Indians we saw were very friendly with us. He asked my brothers if they would shoot him if they saw him in a battle. They told him that they would not. Then he said Me not shoot you. He shook hands again and started. Mother gave him enough bread and meat to last two or three days and that night he went to Stuart Spring where he had two men a picket guard out. He crawled up and shot one man and the other shot at the flash of his gun and run into Springville. Then they sent riders thru Springville to tell the people to run to the School house for we thought the whole band of Walkers were coming.

I was living with my mother at that time, and she had forgot her money under her pillow and all went well. For next morning she said she would have got that money if Walker hadn't been standing at the door. Next morning there were men sent out to see how it was they came to the house and tracked the Indians to where he climbed over the wall to the Spring and that cleared up the Mystery.

The cause of the Walker War.

It was James Ivy that was the principal actor in the drama that caused the Walker War. Walker (the War Chief of the Ute Nation) with his braves and their families were camped on Spring Creek about one mile north of the present town of Springville Utah. All at peace with the white men, spending their time fishing and hunting, trading and being with the people. James Ivy at that time had built a cabin and was living in it with his wife and one child about one mile north and west of where the Indians were camped. In the forenoon of July 17, 1853 an Indian and squaw had three large trout, which she wanted to trade to Mrs. Ivy for some flour. Flour being very scarce at that time. Mrs. Ivy called her husband in to get his views on a trade of that kind. He being at work digging a well. When he saw the trout he said "Those look mighty good to me!" and suggested that Mrs. Ivy might give three pints of flour for them if the squaw would trade that way. He then went out of the cabin to resume his work. Just as Ivy left two more Indians came into the cabin. One of them seems to be the husband or some claim on the squaw who had closed the trade with Mrs. Ivy. When this Indian saw the trout he became enraged and began beating the squaw knocking her down, kicking and stamping her in a brutal manner. While the assault was being committed, Mrs. Ivy ran and called her husband and Mr. Ivy came to the cabin while the Indians was still beating the squaw. He took hold of the Indian and pulled him away, the squaw prostrate on the floor. Ivy tried to push the Indian out of his cabin. When the Indian came in he left his gun standing by the door. As Ivy pushed him out, he grabbed his gun and tried to get into position to shoot Ivy. Ivy got hold of the Muzzle of the gun and in the struggle the gun was broken. The Indian, retaining the stock and Ivy the barrel. When the gun broke Ivy dealt the Indian a hard blow on the head with the barrel of the gun. The Indian fell to the ground, apparently dead but didn't expire until some hours later. The other Indians who came to the cabin at the same time drew his bow and arrow and shot Ivy, the arrow passing through the shoulder of Ivy's hunting shirt, at this Ivy struck the Indian with a violent blow, and he fell unconscious by the side of the prostrate body of the other Indian. Just as Ivy got through with his second Indian, the squaw he had been trying to protect came out of the cabin door, with a stick of wood in her hand which she had picked up by the fire in the cabin with it she struck Ivy a blow in the face, cutting a deep gash in his upper lip. The scar showed plainly from that time until his death. Ivy again used the barrel of the gun to defend himself and struck the squaw. She fell unconscious by the side of the bodies of the other two Indians. There was great excitement. I was a boy with big ears and I heard everything that was going on. We tried to settle with them by giving them everything they wanted in beef, ponies, flour, blankets, but Walker refused to settle unless Ivy was given up to be tried by the Indians. This was refused by the white people, so the Indians left for the Mountains, and killing every white person they could find.

The war lasted two years. I was old enough to stand home guard. I stood guard once a week for nearly two years, but I was not enrolled so I got no pension for my labor. That let me out of herding cows. They sent a company of men with the herd. I was then turned into a farmer and I was living with my

Mother, she had a small farm upon which I raised enough wheat, corn, potatoed and squash for us to use without buying such things.

We had no meadow, I had to go down on the lake bottom and cut cane with some grass among. It is to feed ten or fifteen cattle during the winter. Then I had to cock it up and hawl it alone. I remember my loads were as wide as they were long. I had to put up quite a big stack all by myself. When I threshed out wheat, I did it by driving a yoke of oxen around on it. I made a thrashing floor by hawling clay from the adobe yard and making it round. fifteen or twenty feet and wetting the clay. I took a mall and pounded it down till it looked like a paved street and no wheat could be wasted. Then I placed the wheat around on it about six feet wide with the heads on the butts so the heads were on top and then I drove the oxen around and around on it for a while and then I would turn it over and kent on until the wheat was all thrashed out. Then I would take my rake and rake all the straw out of it, and then I piled the wheat in the middle of the floor, until I got my crop all thrashed out.

There were only two farming sawmills in Springville, and I had to wait my turn to get it cleaned and ready for the mill. I remember there were no thrashing machinrs in this country and no mowers or horse rakes. When I got my crops put away, I went to the canyon to get wook for winter for there was no coal.

I went with a company of men for protection. I was then fourteen or fifteen years old. Time went on this way for awhile when the government sent an army of Soldiers to kill us all. Everybody moved form their houses and went south to Provo. For a while there was great excitement Grigham Young sent word for everybody to make their wheat into flour and barral it up and bury it. So when the army got into Utah we could busy it for future years.

I went to the canyon and got a saw log to make barrels to hold the flour. I took it to the cooper to make the varrels and he made it into chairs and gave me half. When we got the barrels, I had to pound it down with the mall so it would hold a hundred pounds. We had twenty or twenty five barrels. Then everything was ready for a move when ordered.

About this time we had been misrepresented to the government and they ordered an army to come to Utah and straighten us up. Grigham saw that if they got in at that time they would kill us, so he sent an army to stop them. They were divided into many companies and had orders not to let them in, no matter how they did it. It was late in the fall and the grass was burnt everything for hundred of miles. So their teams had no feed when their train came along a mile e or two behind, and ahead we could charge down on them and tell the wagon boss to corral his train close together if he wanted to live any longer. They told the teamsters if they had anything of there own to get it and they gave them two minutes. Then they set fire to their wagons and burnt them to ashes.

When the soldiers came in sight, they could see nothing but smoke. We stole their horses, mules, and oxen and drove them into Salt Lake and wintered them west of Salt Lake on the Island. One company slipped up and tied fire bands to the mules tails and headed them toward the Soldier Camp. They knocked tents and Soldiers in every direction and next morning there was one soldier lying dead. He had died of fright, but they could see no Mormons.

The soldiers told us when they came in they could see Mormons sitting on their horses on every hill and they would bet there was fifty thousand of them sure. Before they got in Brigham sent them word that if they would agree to not make their camp less than thirty miles from every Mormon settlement he would let them in. They were pretty well cooled off and agreed to his and terms and marched through Salt Lake and on the Ceder Valley and cade camp which was called Camp Floyd.

Instead of doing us harm they were great blessing. There was a market for everything we had in gold I went over and made adobe for them and got ninety dollars in gold and gave it to my Mother.

Fanally Civil War broke out and the government needed their army back where they came from so they were called back. General Johnson was s southernor, and he ordered all the governments property sold to the Mormons at less than fifty per cent of their value at auction. They had thousands of mules and hundreds of wagons. You could buy three span of mules, harnessess and wagons for two hundred dollars. Three was Where the Walker brothers got their big start of goods to keep their store with for they bought the commissary out.

A few years after that the McDonald family moved to Heber City, Wasatch I was still living with my Mother. At the age of nineteen years I thought I was a man I was goint to leave my family and go North to the gold mines to get rich quick. I was already to go and they coaxed me to help them go to Heber. I did so and them when we got there they held a meeting for my benefit and made every offer that was reasonable if I would only stay one year. So I stayed and I never got started yet. I always think if I had gone I would have got rich with plenty of money and no troubles, but I stayed and got married.

I am the father of seventeen children and I would not take tha thousand dollars apiece for them, So I think that is more money than I would have got had I gone to the fold mines, but deduct the trouble I have from that and it

would leave me a small margin in cash.

While living in Heber I got acquainted with a very respectable family by the name of Cummings. There was the old man and the old woman and five boys and one girl. I always liked the girl best. We kept company for a while and the first thing I knew I was engaged, and I never thought of getting married for I was going the the married in the spring. I was only twenty and her nineteen, just a couple of keds, but we kept on going together for two years longer before we could agree to set a time to be married. She made me a good partner, always agreeable and nice but she died and left me alone with seven children; She died Oct. 18, 1881 with a stroke.

1866 [In 1864 the Indians war broke out again. It was called the Black Hawk It was fiercer than ever before and they killed men women and children, if they caught them alive, they tortured them to death by cutting them to pieces. and burning them with hot irons. Cutting the wommens breast off and scalping them while they were alive. I've seen women's scalps hanging to their belts. They were long and wavy and combed out nice.

When they went to camp they had a long slim pole and hung them on it and stuck it in the ground, by the tent door to show how brave they were. The more scalps one had the braver he was considered by the warriors of his tribe.

I was at that time forty four years old, I was enlisted in the United States army, and set apart as a minute man. I had to keep the riding horses and saddles in good shape, plenty of ammunition on hand for immediate use in a minute time. It seemed as thou all the Indians were gone.

Our leading men thought the enemy was gathering together to make a raid on the Settlement to make a wholesale Massacre of the settlement. They picked a man from Springville to go out scouting and see if possible where they were and he was to pick another man to go with him. He picked me next day. I got notice from Colonel Page to appear at Springville for further orders.

Next day we started and we found some Indians who seemed to be taking their aquaws farther east to a safer place of hiding. We were gone seven or eight days and when we got back, I reported to Captain Wall what we had done. We saw five Indians before they saw us. I cannot write just what happened on that trip for it would be too long a story.

The Indians gave us a good deal of trouble in Wasatch County. We had to put our cattle all together and ten men herded them day and night. They stole our cattle from our corrals, and our wheat from our bins. about ten or fifteen good Indians came in and said they wanted peace.

So Bishop Joe Murdock made a big feast under the bowery and we all ate with them all the beef they wanted because they were so good, but next night they stole thirty head of our horses to pack it off with. We followed them as far as green river and got some of the horses but didn't see no Indians.

There were just a few people in this valley at that time. There were only ten or twelve fit to ride horses, so it kept us busy to keep them back out of our country. I was first Lieutenant and I was kept busy as picket guard, on the ridge between the Indians and the valley. We took turns three at a time and we had to walk from the head of Daniels canyon to the head of Lake Creek a distance of twelve miles back and forth every day and pack our guns and beddings and food. It was no fun for eight days at a time, and then I had to guard the heard eight days at a time up at Cluffs Ranch. between the time I was chasing Indians in different places. They stole our cattle out of our corrals at night and four of our men followed them over the ridge and down Duchesne. Till we saw little smoke curley up over the chimney. There was some nice crawling up to get a shot at them and there were three Indians. One was on guard while the other two slept. They killed one of the cattle.

The guard was sitting on the pauch cutting some of the fat to eat while the others were sound asleep. The best man was ordered to shoot him and the rest of us to keep our shots for the others when they would get up, at the crack of the gun, the guard jumped up put his hand on his stomach and started for the timber but he fell before he got there.

The others jumped up one of them jumped on a horse but he seemed to be in a hurry for he fell right off again. The other jumped like a deer into the timber and got away after peace was made the Indians said we shot through his breech clout when he was getting to the timber. We jumped up and ran into their camp, yelling like there was a whole company of men. We gathered up their camp with their horses and cattle and started back in a hurry for home.

About this time Brigham Young sent out to Chief Tabby one hundred head of beef to try to make peace and talk over the trouble with him. Captain Wall was ordered to take ten men from the cavalry Company, I was one of the favored ones and was called to go and deliver the cattle and not come back until we delivered the cattle and made peace. That was a hard mission to fill for the Indians had gone east to hide their squaws.

We sent an interpreter to get them to come back and have a talk with us and we wanted to give them a hundred head of Beef and try to make peace, and it took them three days to get back to where he was at the Indian Farm on Duchesne River, but there was a messenger sent from Chief Tabby but the

We sent an interpreter to get them to come back and have a talk with us and we wanted to give them a hundred head of beef and try to make peace, and it took them three days to get back to where he was at the Indian Farm on Duchesne River, but there was a messenger sent from Chief Tabby, but the agent would take him into this house and we couldn't get to talk with him. If we got to speak to him, was You Mormon Dogs. we were stopping in a government block house and could not find out what was going on but the man that kept the store there came over and said They have started to kill every one of you. I cannot see you kelled for nothing. I think they will attack you tomorrow night.

Now I have all kinds of Ammunition and as soon as it gets dark, so the agent can't see you send your men over and pack it over to this house. All I ask is to return it, that is left and shoot at them red devils. Then I have a two inch auger. Set your men to making port holes for your self. I have a forty gallon barral. Fill it full of water for yourselves and pack in your wood for use. I have a big rope. Sink some posts in front of the house, bore holes right through it and put the ropes through the post and tie your horses to ti, so we can't run them off, we worked all night.

Next morning after breakfast we felt pretty good. The old agent came over and looked around and finally he said Gentlemen do you know who's home this is. We felt pretty sore at him for he knew that the Indians were going to attack us the next night so nobody spoke. And he yelled out again. Wo you know whose house this is? I said, Uncles I guess. He never answered and walked on looking at the post holes we had made till he came to one.

When he looked through it he said That is straight for my door. The man ~~that~~ owned the port hole tapped him on the shoulder and said, you are the first Indian we intend to kill. I never saw a man get out of a house as quick and he didn't bother any more.

The Indians came into the cedars the next night and camped next morning at sunrise we could see them moving around and forming in line. Then we saw a messenger come from Tabby just as fast as his horse could run right up to our interpreter and said Tabby is coming in on the charge and says there are ten or fifteen Indians painted black and they are goint ot shoot as soon as they get close enough. They will not mind me.

Al Hunting (our interpreter) slapped him on the leg and told him to go back and tell Tabby that if he came in on the run we could commence shooting as soon as they got close enough. So the Indian went back on the run. Captain Wall said, What did you send that word for? Hunting said I knew if they came in on the rin some of them would shoot. In about fifteen or twenty minutes they formed a line with Tabby on the left and came in on the walk. They surrounded the agent house and Tabby got off and went in. Captain Wall said, I must know what is going on in that house. Lieutenant McDonald, you pick a man and stand in this door and don't let a white man out nor a red man in.

There was some excitement. Every man to his port hole and ready for action. Wall told Tabby that Brigham Young had sent over a hundred head of beef to him to make peace and talk over the troubles and he gave us orders, not to come back until we had talked with him. Tabby said, Tomorrow at sunup, I will fetch ten wafriors with me, Captain Wall said, All right, but must not fetch any guns or pistols or you will get in.

Next morning they came every one of them being painted black and had war clubs swinging on their rists and pistols under their blankets, byt we let them in anyway. There were two rooms, with a door between. We all stayed in the East r room and the Indians in the West room. Wall sat by old Tabby, I stood between the two parties, so that neither party knew what the other party was going to do and the meeting began Tabby commenced by telling some of the broubles and how they had been treated but Wall stopped him and told him it was war now and we wanted peace. We are here to make peace. We must quit killing one another. The black Indians didn't like such talk but when they would talk. Tabby would tell them to be quit and they did. Wall and Tabby said, If we would promise to kill Snow and some other men I forgot who that he would send some Indians with us. Wall told him that could not be for we had laws that would not let us kill them. You don't need to kell them just get somebody to do it and that will be all right But about sun down he told the Indians they could have the cattle and it was a pretty sight to see hthree hundred Indians after on hundred cattle. They were shooting them, and next day we talked all day and Tabby told us that we could go home now, but not to go through the hills, to deep the wagon road and we would be safe. Next day we started and never saw an Indian on the road.

When we got home everybody was very much surprised. There were four or five hundred men camped on the public square so they could start before daylight. That they might reach where we were shut up before dark. When we went out a gun went off accidentally and shot two horses, one died right then and the other was left on the road and he made his way home.

Bishop Mordock told the people that every man had been killed and that all that got away, and all the women knew it was true because the Bishop said so. The next night there was a big party. Everybody went and had a big supper and had a good time.

I now took up farming and Stock Raising and bought all the stock, I could and got so many I could not winter them in this valley, so I took them south to winter quarters. I was eighteen years old when I came to this valley and I have built six houses.